

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY OSLO

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: ELECTORAL MATTERS

1. MORE ATTENTION IS BEING PAID TO ELECTIONS, A SIGN THAT THE POLITICAL SITUATION HAS EVOLVED CONSIDERABLY, E.G., "EL PAIS" HAS REPORTED THAT THE DRAFTING OF AN ELECTORAL LAW MAY TAKE A HIGHER PRIORITY FOR THE SUAREZ GOVT. "EL PAIS'S" SOURCES SUGGEST THAT THE GOVT MAY BE CONSIDERING PUSHING AN ELECTORAL LAW THROUGH THE CORTES AS A TEST OF WHETHER THE CORTES, IN FACT, WOULD BEHAVE PROPERLY IF A PROPOSAL FOR A REFERENDUM WERE PUT TO IT.

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2. OUR OWN UNDERSTANDING HAS BEEN THAT THE ELECTORAL

LAW WOULD COME AFTER THE REFERENDUM, AND "EL PAIS" IN PART IS BASING ITS STORY ON THE BELIEF (ACCURATE) THAT ONE DRAFT OF AN ELECTORAL LAW HAD BEEN DRAWN UP--IN FACT BEFORE THE CHANGE IN GOVT.

3. PEOPLE ARE ALSO TALKING MORE AND MORE--OFTEN IN A CONFUSED, HIGHLY PERSONAL WAY--ABOUT ELECTORAL ALLIANCES. ONE VIEW OF WHAT MIGHT EMERGE--OF INTEREST BECAUSE IT HAS A CONCEPTUAL RATIONALE AND BECAUSE THE ASSUMPTIONS ARE CLEARLY STATED--WAS RECENTLY GIVEN TO US BY THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT, FERNANDEZ ORDONEZ. FERNANDEZ ASSUMES THAT, IF THE GOVT REACHES SOME TACIT ACCOMMODATION WITH THE PCE (PERMITTING CERTAIN OVERT PCE ACTIVITIES, SHORT OF ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION, AND LEGALIZATION AT SOME FUTURE DATE), THREE MAJOR ELECTORAL BLOCS WOULD EMERGE:

--A GOVT-BACKED DEMOCRATIC CONSERVATIVE "CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC" GROUPING BUILT AROUND THE SPANISH DEMOCRATIC UNION (UDE), UNION OF THE SPANISH PEOPLE (UDPE), AND SOME OF THE "TACITO" GROUP. MINISTER OF THE PRESIDENCY OSORIO WOULD BE A PRIME MOVER BEHIND THIS CENTER-RIGHT BLOC, AND PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ WOULD LIKELY BE ITS PRINCIPAL FIGURE. (EVEN THOUGH SUAREZ AND THE UDPE HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN IDENTIFIED WITH CDS, CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS). A FRAGA AREILZA EFFORT IN THE CENTER IS ALSO A NEAR-CERTAINTY, BUT FERNANDEZ SEES THEM DISADVANTAGED BY THEIR ISOLATION FROM THE GOVT AND ITS POLITICAL RESOURCES.--A CENTER/CENTER-LEFT COALITION OF LEFT-LIBERALS, OPPOSITION CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATS. THIS COALITION WOULD BRING TOGETHER SUCH GROUPS AS THE FIVE PARTY CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC "EQUIPO," SOME "TACITOS," THE RECENTLY-FORMED SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION AND SOME EXISTING LIBERAL PARTIES, LIKE IGNACIO CAMUNAS' POPULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

--A SOCIALIST BLOC BUILT AROUND THE SPANISH SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY (PSOE), AND INCLUDING TIERNO GALVAN'S INSIGNIFICANT POPULAR SOCIALIST PARTY (PSP) AND THE FEDERATION OF SOCIALIST PARTIES (FSP), WHICH FERNANDEZ CONSIDERS THE PSOE'S "LEFT WING."

--THERE MIGHT WELL BE AN RIGHT-WING ELECTORAL

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GROUPING, BUT IT SHOULD FARE POORLY IF THE GOVT DOES ITS JOB OF PROMOTING THE CONSERVATIVE CD COALITION PROPERLY. IF, SOMEHOW, THE COMMUNISTS ARE ABLE TO PRESENT CANDIDATES--THROUGH A FRONT GROUP, FOR INSTANCE--THEY SHOULD NOT DO WELL IN THIS FIRST CONTEST EITHER.

4. IF NO GOVT-PCE MODUS VIVENDI IS REACHED, FERNANDEZ FEARS THE OPPOSITION WILL BE COMPELLED TO PRESENT ONE

UNIFIED ELECTORAL SLATE AGAINST THE "GOVT SLATE" THERYBY MAKING THE ELECTION LOOK VERY MUCH LIKE THE POPULAR FRONT-NATIONAL FRONT CONTESTS OF THE THIRTIES, WITH ALL THIS IMPLIES FOR GOVT-OPOSITION COOPERATION IN CARRYING OUT THE TRANSITION. (COMMENT: THIS IS LESS PERSUASIVE: WHILE WE DO NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A SINGLE MAJOR OPPOSITION SLATE, CURRENT TRENDS POINT TO THE PRESENTATION OF COMPETING PARTY OR COALITION SLATES FROM PRINCIPAL OPPOSITION SECTORS. THE MAJOR OPPOSITION GROUPINGS, SUCH AS THE PSOE, CERTAINLY DESIRE TO PRESENT THEIR OWN ELECTORAL LISTS AND WOULD LIKELY FALL BACK TO A SINGLE, UNIFIED OPPOSITION SLATE ONLY IN EXTREMIS.) STABLER

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